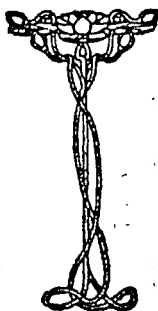


ARCHIVES
OF
SASKATCHEWAN

The Liquor Traffic

and the

Saskatchewan Government



THE FIGHT AGAINST GROWING PUBLIC SENTIMENT AND PROHIBITION

"If we had proposed prohibition, I would have set the Cause of Temperance back fifteen or twenty years."—Hon. Walter Scott, June 1915.

"The people of Saskatchewan have not demanded such drastic measures."—Attorney-General Turgeon, February 1917

WHEN the political history of Saskatchewan comes to be written there will be no more disgraceful chapter than that which deals with the sinister influence which the Liquor Interests exerted on the government of the province for ten years. At present the perspective is too close for a full realization of the bribery, the graft and the corruption, with which the liquor men enmeshed the whole system of government. Perhaps the full story of the frauds and deceits, which emanated from this baneful source will never be told, for already many of the records have been destroyed and many mouths closed in fear of legal punishment. Be this as it may, there is one page of the history that stands out in clearest outline—the unprincipled and persistent attempt of the Government and its subsidized press to defame the character of the Opposition in the Legislature and outside by deliberately and maliciously holding them up as the enemies of temperance and the friends of the liquor men.

A CAMPAIGN OF CALUMNY

Day after day the columns of the Liberal press have been prostituted by falsehood and misstatement. Week after week the Liberal papers have referred, both directly and by inference, to the members of the Opposition in the Legislature as the enemies of temperance and the opponents of prohibition. The speeches of the Opposition in parliament have been twisted and distorted for the same sinister purpose and the statements of the Government colored in support of the same scheme. When Mr. F. C. Tate, of Lumsden, a lifelong advocate of temperance, pleaded for prohibition in the Legislature in 1915 his efforts were described by Hon. George Langley as a "dirty political trick," while the back-benchers echoed the sentiments of the bell-wether with taunts of hypocrisy and accused Mr. Tate of the "simulated sanctimoniousness of a Pecksniff."

The agitation for the banishing of the bar was born in the brains of a small coterie of ardent temperance workers, who formed the nucleus of the Committee of One Hundred. It was fostered by those earnest temperance reformers who devoted their

time and money to destroying the liquor traffic in this province. By 1913 it had gained considerable strength and when the temperance party approached the Government in December of that year it seemed that Premier Scott and his associates would be forced to yield to their demands for a referendum. The Liberal party was, however, under heavy obligations to the liquor men in practically every constituency in which a Liberal had been returned to the Legislature the previous year, and so the Premier and his colleagues attempted to temporize with the Reformers. They introduced a bill, which, while it did not meet with the approval of the majority of the Temperance party, nevertheless seriously alarmed the hotelkeepers and the liquor interests. How the sum of \$10,000 was raised and the disgraceful story of its distribution has already been partly told in its sordid details before a Royal Commission and in the criminal courts of this province. The whole truth may never be exposed.

KNOWN TO CABINET

That this bribery was known to the Government is clear from the statement of Hon. J. A. Calder, who admitted, on the stand before the Brown-Elwood Commission, that he had heard of "what had happened in 1913," and, from the evidence, that he sent for Waddell and Brunner and warned them that the same tactics were not to be repeated in the Shellbrook election. Meanwhile the Banish-the-Bar organization continued to press on the Government the urgent need for temperance reform.

At a mass meeting held on December 9, 1914, they asked for a reduction in the hours during which liquor might be sold and that a referendum on the Banish-the-Bar question be taken in the following December. The resolutions then passed were communicated to the Premier, who replied as follows:

THE PREMIER'S REPLY

H. E. SAMPSON, Esq.,

Secretary, Executive Committee,

Temperance and Moral Reform Association.

Dear Sir,—I have received your letter of 31st December containing information of the conclusions reached on the Banish-the-Bar question by the 9th December Convention, and note that three main requests are put forward, namely: (1) That no new license be granted during the period of the war; (2) That retail sale hours be

reduced and made from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and (3) That a vote on the Banish-the-Bar question be taken on municipal election day next December.

I am authorized to advise you that the Government have decided to notify the Liquor License Board that no action will be taken on recommendations for granting licenses for new premises between now and the end of the present license year. To questions No. 2 and No. 3, I am to say that the reasons which dictated the answer given to your December Convention will continue to exist during the winter months so far as can be foreseen, and the Government's view is that it will be unwise while the unprecedented economic strain continues to either order any immediate change or to make any announcement likely to affect the credit of any class of business, because no class of business can be affected without some of the effects reacting upon other classes of business.

In a word the Government adheres to the view that the present winter, when Saskatchewan is confronting unexampled economic troubles and curtailment of credit with a great deal of unemployment, would be the very worst time to apply radical reform measures, which, no matter how economically beneficial, in time would inevitably cause dislocation and trouble at the start.

Very sincerely yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

That is to say the Premier held fast to his old stand of favoring the Liquor men and refused to shorten the hours during which liquor could be sold or to grant a referendum on the grounds that the closing up of the liquor business would hurt the liquor interests and so react on the general business of the country. It would cause dislocation and trouble at the start.

In explaining his position the Premier said that it would throw out of employment a large number of bartenders and hotel employes, and for this reason he refused to grant the request of the temperance men.

THE TORONTO GLOBE ON PREMIER SCOTT

The Toronto Globe, the leading Liberal newspaper of Ontario, seemed somewhat dazed at Premier Scott's reason for refusing the request of the Saskatchewan temperance forces to close the bars during the war. The Globe, amongst other things of a critical kind, said:—

One wonders if an intelligent and progressive prime minister really did commit himself and his government to an economic argument based on an obvious and proved economic fallacy. That argument has indeed been pressed in Ontario, but usually by men blinded by self-interest or wrapped in their judgment by Bourbon political reaction. If Hon. Walter Scott or any other political leader makes appeal on behalf of the bartenders to "the economic situation," to political economy, **HE MUST GO.**

The Globe then turns the Premier's argument around as follows:—

Were the bars closed during these war times, bartenders would need to seek other employment. Were the bars increased in number, and the hours of sale extended, employment could be provided in the barrooms for a number of men now out of work.

Only a few weeks later there were signs that the Saskatchewan Government was beginning to grow alarmed at the strangle-hold which the liquor men were obtaining. Heeding the warning of The Globe, the Premier turned a complete sommersault on the liquor question.

It was out of this fear that the temperance proposals of the Government were born. The cabinet was by no means unanimous in favor of breaking with the liquor men, and there was a sharp difference of opinion when Hon. George Langley practically brought matters to a crisis by making his famous speech of "the Monster in our midst" at the convention of Rural Municipalities in Saskatoon early in March, 1915. Just ten weeks after the Premier had written the above letter he took the final plunge and made his famous announcement at Oxbow banishing the bars and establishing Government dispensaries.

WILLOUGHBY WAS PIONEER

Previous to this, Mr. Willoughby, the leader of the Opposition, had taken the first step in openly advocating as a war measure the shortening of the hours in which Liquor could be sold. Following the announcement of Premier Scott, Mr. Willoughby announced that while the Conservatives favored the closing of the bars, yet they believed that the question of Prohibition should be submitted to the people. At that time Mr. Willoughby expected that there would be a provincial election on the newly formulated Scott policy and, for this reason, he urged that the question of prohibition

should be submitted to the people at the first municipal election following the general election. In advocating this he was laying down a policy for the Conservative party, and it is obvious that the Conservatives could not secure a referendum until they had been returned to power.

OPPOSITION IN LEGISLATURE

When the Sales of Liquor Bill was brought up in the Legislature an amendment was moved by Mr. Tate, seconded by Mr. Willoughby, which put at rest all doubts, if any had existed, as to the attitude of the Conservative party on the question of Prohibition. An attempt was made to quash the amendment on a technicality, but it was finally brought before the House. The amendment read as follows:

"That this House declares itself in favor of the total abolition of the sale of alcoholic beverages, retail and wholesale, insofar as the province has the power to control the same.

"That this House approves of the exercise by the Government, as a military measure, of the closing of the bars during the period of the war under the moratorium powers vested in the Government and will approve the closing of the wholesale houses under the moratorium powers vested in the Government.

"That temperance legislation in times of peace to be truly effective and beneficial must command the approval of the majority of the people, which can be ascertained only by a vote of the people.

"Therefore, be it resolved, that it is expedient in the interests of true temperance reform that the opinion of the electors be taken on the question at an early date and not later than the municipal elections of 1915, and that if the referendum carry in favor thereof that the same be given legal effect within six months from the date of the referendum."

THE LIBERALS IN A QUANDARY

The introduction of this amendment put the Liberal party in a difficult position. They were posing before the temperance people as the enemies of the liquor trade and were claiming that the taking over of the wholesale houses by the Government was not for revenue but was a movement of moral reform. It was diffi-

cult for the Liberal party to keep on casting slurs at the Opposition as the friends of the Liquor traffic and at the same time oppose the only amendment that would have given Prohibition that had ever been brought up in the Saskatchewan Legislature.

By a process of the elimination of argument and the increase of personal abuse the Liberal cabinet managed to sustain this position and, naturally the back-benchers echoed their approval.

PREMIER SCOTT'S ATTITUDE

Premier Scott, who never looked with favor on prohibition, said: "If we had proposed prohibition it would have set the cause of temperance back for fifteen or twenty years."

OPPOSITION FIGHT DISPENSARIES

The Opposition not only advocated Prohibition, but they put up a vigorous fight against the establishment of dispensaries and were bitterly opposed by the Liberal party and press. The grounds on which the Opposition based their disapproval of the Government liquor stores were mainly three: First, that they were unnecessary and never demanded by anybody; second, that they were created to produce revenue and not as a species of social reform, and, lastly, because there was a danger that they would become another spoke in the big political machine.

That they were unnecessary is proved by the fact that after being in existence for less than eighteen months they were voted out by a majority of six to one in the province. With regard to revenue, Premier Scott declared "There will not be one cent of revenue for the province from the liquor stores. In the first year there will be a loss of \$50,000." Hon. W. F. A. Turgeon, Attorney-General, said: "The Liquor stores will not in the slightest degree reduce the taxation of the people." Hon. J. A. Calder said: "In fact we are facing a considerable falling off in the revenues of the province and we will have to adjust our financial methods to meet that loss. We are making no effort to assist the finances of the province with profits out of the liquor business." And again, "The profits will all go to eleemosynary or charitable institutions," declared the Premier. Yet in the budget speech delivered by Hon. C. A. Dunning in 1917 he spoke of a revenue of over \$1,500,000 from the sale of liquor. The gross takings from the liquor stores for the first ten months that they were in operation amounted to approximately two million dollars.

POLITICS AND DISPENSARIES

With regard to political influences within the system, the Premier and the cabinet were just as outspoken. Hon. Walter Scott said: "The officer in charge of the system will be entirely independent. Every member should pledge himself not to interfere with the working of the system. Not a single appointment will be made on political grounds and the very suggestion is cowardly and a distortion of truth."

Nevertheless a few days later an announcement was made that J. F. Bole, Liberal M.L.A. for Regina, would head the Commission. A glance will show how many Conservatives were given positions in this department. It is doubtful if five per cent. of the appointees were based on suitability for the job or for any reason other than because the appointees were staunch Liberals and the representative of the district was always consulted about appointments. The whole system was a hive of political friends from the Commissioner to the bottle-washers.

PEOPLE DISPLEASED

The dispensaries had not been in existence many weeks before the temperance people began to raise their voices against them. Indignation meetings were held in several cities and towns protesting against their continuance. With the Premier of Great Britain pleading for economy and conservation of Empire wealth many patriotic citizens thought it a crime that thousands of dollars should be wasted in alcohol every day.

When the House again sat Mr. Bradshaw (Prince Albert) brought in a strong resolution asking the Government to immediately close the dispensaries. His resolution was worded as follows:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the system of Government dispensaries created under the Sales of Liquor Act is detrimental to the best interests of the people of this province, is a blight on the reputation of Saskatchewan and should be abolished."

This was on February 4, 1916, and the resolution was vigorously opposed by the cabinet and the back-benchers. Mr. Magee, Moose Mountain, went so far as to read a counter resolution commending the Government for the good work and praying that the dispensaries might be continued. During the debate a year before Mr.

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Magee had said: "Fifteen years ago I favored prohibition, but after conversations with many men I have altered my opinions." Hon. W. R. Motherwell spoke of the dispensaries as a "protection to the soldiers," a view which was absolutely opposed by every military authority in Saskatchewan. Continuing, Mr. Motherwell said: "The dispensaries were a temporary step to meet certain extraordinary conditions and when the extraordinary conditions are disposed of away go the dispensaries.."

REFORMERS STILL ACTIVE

All this time the Banish the Bar organizations, the reform associations and the churches were demanding the withdrawal of the legislation and the closing up of the liquor stores. But the government stuck to their guns and to their disreputable revenue producing dispensaries.

Then the Grain Growers spoke.

Assembled in convention at Saskatoon in 1916, they first asked that the Liquor stores should be closed within three months. Then by unanimous vote they asked that a referendum should be taken in June. The politicians, by telling the farmers that a full vote could not be secured in June, engineered the proposal that the referendum should be taken at the time of the next municipal elections in December.

Without waiting for consultation with his colleagues, Hon. George Langley promised that their wishes should be carried out.

OPPOSITION GROWS

Yet day after day the agitation still continued. The call of the Empire and of the better element in the province became more and more insistent. Appeals were made to Premier Martin to use the powers he had under the moratorium act to close the stores which every clergyman, every social worker, every police official and every magistrate was condemning in the strongest terms. But the magnet of the revenue was too strong. The dispensaries continued.

DOMINION GOVERNMENT ACTS

Meanwhile with the prohibition wave sweeping through the prairie provinces there was a demand by the temperance forces that the Dominion Government should take action. The Liberal

governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan had been quick to shield themselves behind the "limits of provincial powers to deal with the liquor traffic." The press took up the cry and while the Government was operating its liquor stores in this province and making a large profit out of the sale of alcohol, the party press was throwing the blame for the continuance of the traffic on the Conservative Government at Ottawa.

Consequently, in response to the growing sentiment for more drastic legislation, the Minister of Justice introduced a bill in the House of Commons during the 1916 session which has become known as the Doherty Act, and the effect of which is similar to the Webb-Kenyon law of the United States. That is to say the act provides that if any of the provinces of Canada shall pass a law to prohibit the liquor traffic that the Dominion act makes it an offence for liquor to be shipped into that province if the liquor is to be dealt with contrary to the provincial laws.

THE DOHERTY ACT

The main clause of the act reads as follows:

Any person, who by himself, his clerk, servant or agent officer or employee of any other person, or of any government railway or steamship whether Dominion or Provincial

(a) Shall send, ship, take, bring or carry or cause to be sent, shipped, taken, brought or carried to or into any province from or out of any other province or import into any province from any place outside of Canada any intoxicating liquor knowing or intending that such intoxicating liquor will or shall be thereafter dealt with in violation of the law of the province into which such intoxicating liquor is sent, shipped, taken, brought or carried or imported as aforesaid; or

(b) Shall sell or cause to be sold any intoxicating liquor knowing or intending that such intoxicating liquor will be sent, shipped, taken, brought or carried into any province from any other province or from any place outside of Canada and thereafter dealt with in violation of the law of the province into which such intoxicating liquor is sent, shipped, taken brought, carried or imported as aforesaid.

Shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty for the first offence of not less than one hundred dollars and for increasing penalties for succeeding offences.

LIBERALS OPPOSE PROHIBITION

This act, however, was not allowed to pass without some opposition in the Senate. Sir Wilfrid Laurier has never declared himself in favor of prohibition and the Liberal party as a party has always taken care not to commit themselves against the liquor traffic. The Senate, the majority being Liberal at that time, consequently proceeded to nullify the bill so far as they dared. When it was returned amended to the House of Commons, Mr. Doherty spoke as follows with regard to the bill:

"I desire to say that it is only after a great deal of hesitation that I have decided—I would rather say to submit to than accept all of the amendments which have been made by the Senate to this Bill. The amendments consist in striking out the penalty of suspension of a license proposed to be imposed upon manufacturers violating this law for the first and second offences, leaving the penalty of forfeiture for the third offence to stand. It is not in that regard that I have my greatest hesitation in accepting the amendments. These has been struck out of the Bill clause 5. That is a provision which enabled prosecutions for violations of this act to be instituted as well at the place to which the liquor had been sent as at the place whence it had come. The striking out of this provision will very materially and in a most serious manner prejudice the effective enforcement of the act. I feel this so strongly that were it not that I have good reason to believe that if this House refused to concur in the amendments and sent the Bill back we might run the risk of losing the measure entirely, I would not make the motion which I am about to make."

DOHERTY ACT RETAINS POWER

Yet in spite of the action of the Liberal Senate which sought to lighten conditions for the liquor manufacturer and distiller, the Doherty Act retains sufficient power to prevent the importation of intoxicating liquor into any province after the government of that province has declared that the consumption and possession of such liquor is against the law.

This is the view taken by the Solicitor-General for Canada, and this view was communicated to the Saskatchewan Government before the Liquor legislation of 1917 was brought down in the Legislature.

Late in February with the patent object of entrapping the highest legal officer of the Dominion, Hon. W. R. Motherwell wired

to Hon. Arthur Meighen for his opinion with regard to the powers of the provinces to prohibit the importation of liquor under the Doherty Act. The Minister of Agriculture's telegram read as follows:

"Press and Social Service Council of Winnipeg report you as saying that dry provinces can now stop the importation of liquor if they so desire. Kindly wire if this is your view and also if this power has been conveyed or effected by the Doherty Act."

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THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL'S OPINION

Hon. Arthur Meighen's answer could not have been couched in plainer or more clear-cut language. He said:

"My view is that any province may now wholly prevent by provincial legislation the use and possession of liquor within its boundaries and if any province so acts the Doherty Act thereupon necessarily forbids importation; consequently provinces have full and adequate prohibitory powers."

Yet in the face of this exposition of the law the Provincial Government refused to pass the necessary provincial legislation that would have made this province "bone-dry." They proved once again that they were opposed to prohibition. After receiving this telegram Hon. W. R. Motherwell said in the House that "the Doherty Act is a miserable substitute for prohibition designed to shelve the responsibility on the provinces." If the responsibility was shelved on the provinces they shirked those responsibilities miserably and in a most cowardly way.

THE LAST STAND OF THE OPPOSITION

And now we come to the last disgraceful chapter of the long roll of subterfuge and deceit which the Liberal Government has displayed in dealing with the liquor problem. When the legislation of 1917 was brought down in the House it was found that not only was the new measure not a prohibition bill but that it expressly stipulated that liquor could be consumed in the homes of Saskatchewan.

The Liberal Government, under pressure, had banished the glass but had driven the bottle into the home.

Before this bill was brought down Mr. Willoughby, the leader of the Opposition, had introduced a resolution calling upon the Legislature to pass a law

"Making it illegal to consume or have for consumption as a beverage in the province any intoxicating liquor save for medicinal purposes, subject to strict regulation."

The passage of such a law would have brought the Doherty Act into force and the province of Saskatchewan would have been a bone-dry province so far as intoxicating liquor is concerned.

How was the resolution received? The Attorney-General said that the plan was too drastic, the people had not asked for it.

"Mr. Willoughby is exaggerating in his own motion. The referendum last December was for the abolition of the liquor stores system, but not by any means for the drastic measure Mr. Willoughby has proposed. Nobody had ever asked the Government to take such action, not even the temperance organizations.

TEMPERANCE WORKERS PROTEST

And on the following day, when this statement was telegraphed to them, a delegation from the Banish-the-Bar League hurried from Saskatoon and after conferring with local delegates in Regina, urged on the Government with the full force of the Temperance Party of Saskatchewan that they should immediately eliminate the offending clause with regard to consumption of liquor in private houses and make the province bone-dry.

And the Government refused to accede to their request.

Mr. Willoughby was outspoken in denunciation of the bill. In the course of a vigorous speech which left no doubt in the minds of all who heard him as to where the Conservative party stood in the matter of prohibition, he declared:

THE LEADER IS OUTSPOKEN

"I consider the Government stops short of the goal to which it should go, the goal which the sentiment of the people of this province is seeking. The people of the province as a whole are willing to forego their personal rights to secure temperance. The legislation I am asking would be positively effective and efficient now. It would not have been effective before the Doherty Act, but it is possible now... The people are ready for bona fide prohibition.

Why, if they wanted liquor, did they vote six to one for the abolition of the dispensaries? It is an insult to them to say they wanted to retain the right of importation of liquor."

But Mr. Willoughby had one more argument to put forward. He pointed out that under the Sales of Liquor Act a clause had been provided, and that the same clause had been inserted in the new bill to the effect that the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council had power to establish a prohibition territory within the province. It expressly stipulated that such territory might be established above township 55, and he asked pertinently that if the Government had power to create such prohibition territory beyond township 55, what was there to prevent them creating prohibition territory above township 54, or for that matter, below it.

PRESS IS MUZZLED

To this query no answer was vouchsafed at that time, and so strong an argument did it seem to the Liberals themselves that all reference to it was excluded from the report of the debate which appeared next morning in the Regina Leader, a newspaper which drew nearly \$3,000 from the sales of liquor system during the first ten months it was in operation for "supplies, periodicals and general expenses," in addition to the amount contracted for through the King's Printer.

At a later stage in the debate under a pre-arranged plan the two representatives of the territory north of township 55 rose in the House and asked that the clause be excluded from the new act as they wanted their territory to be treated in the same way as the rest of the province. As a result the Attorney-General deleted this clause from the bill.

Therefore not only did the Liberal Government refuse to take steps to make Saskatchewan a prohibition province but it passed legislation by which the only portion of dry territory in Saskatchewan was eliminated and was permitted to have liquor sent into the home by act of the Liberal Government.

STRICT PARTY VOTE

Mr. Willoughby's resolution was defeated on a strict party vote, not a single legislator on the Liberal side voting in its favor. When the Government bill came up for its second reading with its obnoxious clause permitting the drinking in private houses the Con-

servatives voted solidly against it, and the Party press immediately announced that the Conservative Party had voted against prohibition.

In the annals of Saskatchewan Legislature there is not a single utterance by one of the Saskatchewan cabinet or the back benchers in favor of prohibition. They have consistently opposed amendments that would give prohibition to this province in 1915, in 1916, and lastly in 1917. They claimed that it was in order to get the traffic out of the hands of the wholesalers that they established the dispensaries, and yet they pass an act which puts the traffic back into the hands of the commission houses outside of this province.

In the face of the Doherty Act and the opinion of the Solicitor-General for Canada they repeat the parrot cry that it is "up to the Dominion Government to enforce prohibition." They provide by legislation for drinking in private houses and blame the Government at Ottawa because the province is not dry.

A DISGRACEFUL CALUMNY.

The Liberal party continues to taunt the Conservatives with being friends of the Liquor interests. The subsidized Regina Leader and the Saskatoon Phoenix declare in bold headlines that the Conservative party voted solidly against prohibition.

What a campaign of calumny and hypocrisy. What wilful and determined misrepresentation.

Which party in Saskatchewan is the Temperance Party. The Liberal Party, which has consistently voted against prohibition, saying that the people have not asked for it. The Liberal Party that has met argument with personal abuse and calumny, or the Conservative Party, which has introduced three resolutions at succeeding session of the Legislature calling upon the Government of Saskatchewan to pass prohibition.

It is time that the mask of hypocrisy was torn from these advocates and friends of the liquor traffic—the Liberal politicians.

**Bradshaw
Papers**

